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22 June 2015

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Tob P6

Policy: Space Law

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SUBJECT: Outer Space Meetings -- MOL or Gemini Issues

Following are instructions to deal with possibility Soviets will raise issue of MOL or Gemini:

1. MOL. Soviets may charge MOL is program to develop possible use of space orbital labs as platforms for dropping bombs, that program aimed at testing orbital nuclear weapons carriers. TASS concluded that GA Res 1884(XVIII) which banned orbiting nuclear or any other kinds weapons of mass destruction in outer space in effect covered both carriers and warheads proper.

DEL should point out MOL will not repeat not carry any weaponry whatsoever, that is space laboratory only which is intended conduct defense research primarily but will doubtless produce important benefits in terms scientific knowledge and advancement space exploration generally. There no relationship MOL and weapons in space. Fact program being run by Dept Defense irrelevant to charge: many of both SOV and US astronauts are military

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military personnel and space activities both countries have had military as well as nonmilitary components. Question is not whether program is military or nonmilitary, question is whether program is [illegible] legitimate under international law.

Size of MOL immaterial. Natural that as scientific progress in space proceeds, size space lab also increases. Could not require two men work one month in Gemini size craft. In terms size, MOL anticipated to be 40 ft long by 10 feet diameter. Design of vehicle was [illegible] not permit orbital weapon capability. [illegible] Design such that Gemini capsule will effect re-entry astronauts. MOL would burn up on re-entry. Furthermore/ there is US has no need develop orbital bombardment capability, since would offer no military advantage over operational ICBM's.

Re Ran 1884, President Johnson when announcing MOL reaffirmed US intention not RPT not place weapons mass destruction in orbit.

2. Gemini. Should SOVs rap Gemini program as having military or non-peaceful aims, DEL should quickly brush aside as preposterous. Point to 1) world-wide publicity accompanying progress and achievement of program, 2) invitation of President Johnson to SOVs have rep next launch. [illegible]

Should SOVs reopen spying from satellite issue, DEL may reiterate US position that observation from space is consistent with international law, just as is observation from the high seas. END

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